

National Statement of Commitment to Transform Education
Republic of Nauru

UN Headquarters, 19 September 2022

The following statement of commitment has been synthesised from a range of recent key policy statements and the consultation processes that led to their establishment.

A. Ensuring full recovery from COVID-19 educational disruption

COVID 19 impacted Nauru relatively late in terms of a local range of restrictions and mandates put in place to keep the nation safe. Prior to this border closures were sufficient to keep the country free of its direct impacts. Nevertheless, since 2020 the following disruptions to education have been experienced:

- Disruption to the supply of expatriate teachers resulting in large combined class sizes staffed by local teachers.
- Restricted international mobility has constrained the work of overseas technical assistance in Education.
- The closure of schools for short periods of time, most recently June 2022, and the challenges of home schooling via the use of teacher prepared learning packages.

Much of the recovery work is on-going. In conjunction with donor partners, Nauru COVID 19 Development Response Plan emphases include the strengthening of “remote learning” and IT systems to make this possible. A particular focus from 2020 has been on the implementation of learning packages aligned with the Nauru Curriculum. Additionally, the strengthening of learning outcomes, ECE, work readiness for labour mobility, and the secondary scholarship programme.

B. Identifying the main strategic transformations and levers for reimagining education for the 21st century and accelerating progress towards shared education goals

The following describe pre-COVID challenges concerning Nauru’s progress toward SDG 4 and some of its selected dimensions:

SDG 4.1.4 Exclusion and SDG 4.1.2 Completion – overall student absenteeism remains a critical challenge, particularly at the secondary level, but with some recent improvement in the recent years.

SDG 4.1.1 Learning Outcomes – literacy and numeracy rates continue to be low against Pacific regional benchmarks. Literacy rates are higher than Numeracy rates and girls achieve at higher levels in both areas compared to boys.

SDG 4.5.1 Gender Equality – Girls out-perform boys in literacy and numeracy in primary school. However, girls are less likely to continue to senior secondary levels or complete other qualifications.

SDG 1.a.2 Financing – The recent budget indicates an increase in spending on education compared to previous periods. The education budget also receives an allocation in terms of direct financial aid each year from donor partners.

The following is a selection of key transformations that the Nauru government is working toward.

- The development and implementation of a new Education Strategic Plan
- The recruitment of expatriate teachers including the further training and recruitment of local Nauruan teachers as well as in-service learning for current teachers
- Improved education infrastructure and resources including enhanced internet connectivity

- Pedagogic development in terms of: rich tasks; student centred learning; special education; Nauruan studies; and specific strategies to address low literacy and numeracy rates
- Educational planning done in concert with other sectors such as health and labour

C. Ensuring strengthened and more sustainable public financing of education

The Nauru government's budget allocation for 2022-2023 represents the third successive annual increase for Education. With only two other sectors receiving a higher budget allocation this year the breakdown is notable in the following areas:

- tertiary scholarships for leadership and civil service capacity building
- school health and nutrition
- "back to school" support for families
- teacher professional development
- individual student trust funds paid out on the basis of school attendance
- Increased allocations for teacher salaries and educational resources to all schools

The financing of Education is based on the rationale of *Sustaining a Resilient Naoero*. There are also explicit links to the National Sustainable Development Strategy (2019-2030) and the national vision of a sustainably resilient Nauruan future with increasing investments in education, health and the built environment. The financing of education is further underpinned by a desire to lessen reliance on expatriate workers and equip Nauruans with the capacity to ensure the implementation of the Higher Ground Initiative (HGI). This initiative seeks to relocate key infrastructure and housing to the higher central interior as a result of increasing environmental and climate fragility.

D. Raising the ambition of national education targets and benchmarks

In terms of national educational ambition, the key guiding policy is the National Sustainable Development Strategy 2019-2030, recently revised in 2019. The three key educational objectives are: learning opportunities for employment; greater learning potential through the removal of institutional barriers; and an education system consistent with Nauru's cultural and social context. There are also a number of cross cutting goals with bearing on education delivery: safeguarding cultural heritage; increased social inclusion; effective youth justice and participation; child friendly communities; greater recognition of the role of women and more sustainable social policies.

In relation to the SDG 4 the following targets and indicators are currently being assessed:

- To increase the number of Yr 12 graduates
- Policy development and enforcement in the 7 national development priorities espoused in the National Sustainable Development Strategy 2019-2030
- An overall increase in school attendance
- The training and recruitment of new teachers with suitable qualifications
- Internet connectivity in all education buildings
- Greater involvement of parents/community
- Strengthening of educational data management as a basis for educational decision making